

The Church School Teacher

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THE
CHURCH SCHOOL
TEACHER

VOL. XIX No. 4

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In This Issue

By L. H. WESTBERG

Augustana Lutheran Church

SUNDAY, May 7, begins *National Family Week*. The week ends with Mother's Day, May 14. To help you prepare for the observance of *National Family Week* has been the primary purpose of this issue of THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER.

Now, there are national weeks for this and national weeks for that. One tends to grow weary of them and callous toward them. But to pastors, church-school teachers, parents, and children *National Family Week* is important. Is there anyone who thinks parents do not need help and encouragement for their task of rearing children in the Christian faith? Is there anyone who is sincerely satisfied with the co-operation between the home and the church school? Similar questions might go on *ad infinitum*. (It would be a good exercise for a church-school

staff to make a list of similar questions. Should any staff care to send me its list I shall be happy to use it in a future issue. EDITOR.)

Perhaps *National Family Week* seems to be a superficial approach to the problems of the family and the church school. In many instances it is, no doubt. But the week sets aside a time to dramatically bring the *family* and the *church school* into your own consciousness and to the attention of families inside and outside your congregation. It gives an occasion to get at some of the real problems of the family and help in their solution. And, it is an opportunity to join forces with churches of all denominations throughout your city and country to strengthen the basic institution of society.

Do not make it a sentimental week or let it end in a sentimental Mother's Day. Make it a practi-

cal, helpful week with a gloriously Christian finale.

You will get some suggestions for the week from your Board of Parish Education. This issue of *THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER* will be a help, too. You can start right out with Director Vogeley's column for ideas. *As the Superintendent Sees It!* written by Miss Ruth Tubbesing, interprets the week and continues with excellent suggestions. Pastor Paul L. Baumgartner writes from the inspiration of Philemon, verse 2, and gives us a fine contribution. The articles by Miss Shupe and Mrs. Nelson on the *Nursery Department* should be read by everybody, including the teachers of adult Bible classes.

That holds true for Mrs. Paul Lindberg's story, too. A letter from Mrs. Lindberg says: "If anyone writes to ask if there is something they can do to help, tell them, 'Yes!' It would give me a great deal of pleasure to answer such letters personally, especially children's." You will find Mrs. Lindberg's address in my introduction to her story.

Pictures

Reader Karl S. Oelschlager of National City, California, writes: "Leach, Protestant Church Build-

ing is a book which also has some thoughtful suggestions for departmental pictures, as recommended in your January *THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER*, page 9."

Many thanks. We are happy to pass this suggestion on to our readers.

Nursery Courses

In the February issue I mentioned the new nursery teaching materials which will be ready in the spring. Today Director Vogeley tells about another nursery course to be ready next fall.

Teachers in nursery departments will welcome this information. They have been struggling along with a dearth of material.

The articles in this issue on nursery departments should stimulate more church schools to take the step from *nursery* to *nursery department*. If your school is ready to take the step be certain to get competent teachers for them. Some superintendents think a good place to start an inexperienced teacher is in the lower grades. "Let them get the experience and work their way up!" Do not make that error. Get the best teachers you can for your nursery department. And have everything in readiness before you begin the first session.

More About Family Week

Please do not let *National Family Week* pass by this year without making something of it. The articles in this issue plus the packet your pastor and superinten-

dent will receive from the Board of Parish Education will give you many ideas. You will find encouraging interest among the parents. *The important thing is to make your plans early.*

From Your Director

By R. A. VOGLEY

American Lutheran Church

IF the deadline for this column had been one week later, I could have given you more definite information about our 1950 program. However, as a result of the meeting of the Parish Education Committee and the Board on January 17-19, we have general plans which will interest you.

You know that our fall Parish Education theme has been approved by all churches in the National Lutheran Council. It is, "Forward in Parish Education: Come, Learn, Serve with Us."

For our spring church-school association rallies there will be prepared a topic on the theme, "Where Do We Go from Here?" This will show what can be done to move "Forward in Parish Education," winning more to our Sunday schools and to Christ, teaching all Christians more thoroughly

and more effectively God's Word and way, and preparing more trained teachers and leaders. We want to provide more help for all of you who are fulfilling the Great Commission in your congregation.

National Family Week

For many years your Board of Parish Education and THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER have brought you suggestions for *National Family Week*. If you have never had a program or a family night gathering, refer to the April 1949 issue of THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER for program suggestions for a Father and Son Banquet, a Mother and Daughter Banquet, or a Family Night gathering for the entire congregation. Naturally one of the things to discuss at any meeting is family worship so that "Every Christian

Family Has Family Worship." We remind you again of the filmstrip, "At Home with God." Many families have started to conduct family worship after such a meeting and after seeing the filmstrip, "At Home with God."

Sustain the Interest

Just as it is not sufficient to honor mother on Mother's Day only, so it is not sufficient to remember the parents of our pupils only during *National Family Week*. The relationship of the Sunday school and the homes of the congregation must be maintained throughout the year.

It is very evident that in our departments, especially from the Intermediate down, much can be done to create more parent interest. There are churches which have departmental meetings for the parents every quarter. At these parent-staff meetings, the parents are shown what is being done and what will be done on Sunday mornings in the department. At meetings of the pre-school departments, the parents are taught the songs and even some of the finger plays which their children learn. Congregations are also having visiting days in the departments, special days to which the parents are given a personal invitation.

We hear reports, "This has worked out successfully."

Nursery Class Lessons

We are happy to announce that the Board of Publication has approved the revision of our present *Lessons for Little Ones*, so that it will be available in the fall as a course especially prepared for the Nursery Class. We hope to provide *special helps for the parents* so that the Christian training of the children, which is started in Sunday school, will be continued and strengthened in the home.

To Answer Needs

For years we have needed a course, adequate for our three-year-olds in the Sunday school. This revised course is solidly Bible. The units develop major thoughts which our three-year-olds should gain. In developing the course there has been one thought in mind, that is, "What should a three-year-old learn in Sunday school?" These units will give you some idea:

- I. God's Love (Creation)
- II. God's Care
- III. God's Great Gift (The Advent-Christmas unit)
- IV. Jesus Grows Up
- V. Jesus Loves Us
- VI. Jesus Is Our Saviour

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The Family, the Church, the School

By RUTH TUBBESING

*Parish Worker, Arlington Hills Church
St. Paul, Minnesota*

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK, this year, May 8-14, 1950, is a call for a nation-wide rallying of individuals, churches, church schools and educational groups to the rebuilding of American home life on the highest level. Right away, I suppose, the questions come: How does that week concern the church school? Why should I, a busy leader of Christian education in the church and community, or a busy church-school teacher, or superintendent, do something about National Family Week? What is the purpose of having such a week?

First of all, we might give just a few reasons for having National

Family Week. We are agreed, I am sure, that family life in America must be conserved and sustained. Religious groups of America are calling upon the parents of the nation to join hands with the churches and communities in helping maintain wholesome family life. One of the things that should be stressed during National Family Week is the reading of God's Word in the home. It goes without saying that placing stress upon others to read God's Word has no influence whatever, unless we, ourselves, read it daily.

A second reason for observing National Family Week goes back many years to the God-fearing

men and women who helped build our country. They grew up in homes where religion had an important place. This week all those who hope and pray for a better world should be working to restore religion to its place of importance in the home. Your church, and you, as a church-school teacher, or superintendent, can help to see that emphasis is placed on this important point.

Still another reason for observing National Family Week is because parents are responsible for creating an atmosphere of religion in the home. Children need such an atmosphere to develop good ways of thinking and living. Family fun, fellowship, family prayers and Bible reading, reverence for justice and good will, all these make indelible impressions and determine the direction character shall take. Good children are still the natural product of good homes. Some suggestions are given for placing emphasis on this particular factor.

A fourth reason is that as goes the home, so goes the school, the church and the nation. Emphasis should be given to the right of every child to spiritual training, and the interdependence of home and church as they seek common

values and build good character.

We can not help but think of this poem written by Grace Noll Crowell:

So long as there are homes to which
men turn
At close of day;
So long as there are homes where
children are,
Where women stay—
If love and loyalty and faith be found
Across those sills—
A stricken nation can recover from
Its gravest ills.

So long as there are homes where
fires burn
And there is bread;
So long as there are homes where
lamps are lit
And prayers are said;
Although people falter through the
dark—
And nations grope—
With God himself back of these little
homes—
We have sure hope.

Suggestions

In the planning of programs for this week, remember that if all the church does in twelve months is to observe this week, it has missed its meaning. The purpose of this week, I believe, is to call attention to a great need about which many things will be done throughout the year. If nothing has been done so

far, then this week is a good place and time to start to high light your efforts and give impetus to future plans. National Family Week will have served its purpose best when it is the occasion for launching an all-year program of education in family life in the church and the community.

By way of suggestions for observing National Family Week in your church, church school and community, we might mention the following. Some of them have been tried in years past in various communities throughout the nation; other come from personal observance in our community.

Family-at-Home Night

Family-at-Home Night is one good feature. This plan would involve having all families plan a special evening at home simultaneously with the best kind of family good times. So often, as soon as the evening meal is over, there is the parting-of-the-ways for the family in different directions, each with a particular meeting to attend, or some particular function to do. In this kind of a plan a family worship experience should high light each one. If need be, a simple worship service could be set up and distributed to the families for use that evening.

Family Night at Church becomes another valuable feature, with the program for that evening including the interests of members of all ages: an old-fashioned family dinner, a hymn sing, a dramatic presentation, a family-life picture. In including the church school in the program for that evening, there might be a simple worship service used in which the children take part, this service to be so prepared that it could be adapted to the home. Or in the dramatic presentation, depending on what it is, the church school could be represented. Or yet another, in place of the dramatic presentation a film might be used, which was sponsored by the members of the church school.

Hobby Night

Oftentimes hobby night and hobby exhibits have been held and excite interest, for it could involve hobbies of all ages. In such a program might also be included a Family Book Exhibit. The public libraries are glad to offer help in matters of this kind. A bookshelf on family life, and a literature table or rack could also be set up. These displays would not need to be limited to just this one night, but if there is a church library or a place to display books in the nar-

thex of the church, such a display might be there throughout the year, with emphasis placed upon it at various times.

The public library in your community might also be asked to display books on family life during National Family Week.

Special emphasis might be placed upon the family at the Sunday morning church services, when parents and children are asked to be in church together. Invitations could be sent to the homes during the week before the Sunday church service, inviting the family to attend church the next Sunday, or better yet, making it more personal, the children of the church school could make the invitations themselves, taking them home to their parents. Then, of course, the church school teacher should be sure to call each home during that week to remind the parents in the event that some of the invitations become lost or misplaced, which happens very often.

Open House

Still another suggestion might be that of church-school open house for the parents, with exhibits of the work done, the materials and equipment used. Parents so often know so little about the church school and its curriculum.

Such information as to what the church school is trying to do, should be helpful and important in bringing the church and family closer together.

Or how about personal visits to each of the homes of your church-school pupils during National Family Week? Announcement could be made prior to this week through the church and church school, that teachers would like to pay a friendly visit to each one of the homes. It will help the teacher become acquainted with the family, the home itself, and give to the family a sense of interest and concern that the church school has in that home.

Missionary Emphasis

Last of all, there should be also a missionary emphasis, both upon the church school and the home. For the church school, prior to this week, there could be the doing of some particular project or the gathering of articles for families in some other area of our country, Mexican missions, migrants, Jewish missions, etc. For the family, Help-another-Family project could be carried out, which would call for friendly acts toward families near at hand, help to needy families, or help to families in other parts of the world.

The above are only suggestions. Perhaps in many instances, they may have to be altered to fit your particular situation.

As church-school teachers and superintendents, let us pray that

God will lead and guide us in a deeper understanding of this important work and of the things that can be accomplished through the observance of such a week as National Family Week.

The Monthly Conference of Teachers and Workers

Aim: To emphasize the need for closer co-operation between the home and the church school.

Worship Suggestions:

Hymns: *Father of All, Thy Care We Bless; O Happy Home, Where Thou Art Loved the Dearest; Thou Who a Tender Father Art.*

Scripture: Choose verses such as the following: Proverbs 22. 6; 2 Timothy 3. 16; Matthew 18. 20; 1 Peter 5. 7. Meditate upon them in the light of establishing the family altar in our church-school homes.

Discussion Suggestions:

1. How to get parents more concerned about the spiritual welfare of their children.
2. How to impress parents with the significance of the family altar.
3. How to prolong and make permanent the annual increased church-school attendance during the Easter and spring period.
4. How to make the church library function in bringing parents closer to the church school.
5. How to reach unchurched children and their parents.

Plans for the Next Month:

1. Arrange a parents' night. Consult this issue of THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER for workable ideas.
2. Teacher-training workshops and institutes. Watch for those scheduled for your area. Plan to send your teachers.
3. Vacation Church School. This instruction period is fast approaching. It needs advance praying and planning.
4. Toronto Convention. Will someone represent your church school at the Mid-Century World Convention on Christian Education in Toronto, August 10-16?

Let's Get Ready for Sunday School

By MARIE SHUPE

*Board of Parish Education,
American Lutheran Church*

Here is an article which should be passed along to every Nursery Class superintendent, parent, and Sunday-school teacher. It could well be the basis for a Church School Workers Conference, a mothers' group, a parents' club, etc. It reveals keen insights and makes practical suggestions. EDITOR.

Begin Early

AT first glance this topic might seem to refer to washing faces, brushing hair, getting out freshly-ironed suits and dresses, and seeing to it that our Jacks and Jills have that clean, shiny, well-dressed look so that we may say with pride, "Now you are ready for Sunday school." It is not nearly so simple as that.

Getting ready for Sunday school takes a long time. How long? That all depends. In many cases the Sunday-school Nursery Class is a child's first experience in a group, away from home, and without the presence of some other member of his family. That is a wide gap to bridge. For a naturally timid child, the gap is even wider. Our job as parents and teachers is to help

the little child take this important step in the easiest possible way. This takes time.

Attitudes Are Important

One of the goals of the Nursery Class is to help a child form the right attitudes toward the church school. We are proud of the two and three-year-olds who can listen to a short Bible story, perhaps say a few short Bible verses, show understanding of some of the simple but great Bible truths; these are all important. But the way he feels toward Sunday school, his eagerness to go each Sunday morning, his anticipation of it through the week as he asks, "Is tomorrow Sunday school?" or "How many sleeps till Sunday school?" These are important too, very important.

If he learns to love to come to God's house when he is two or three, if he has come to mean it when he says, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord," a pattern has been set for his attitude toward the church and the church school that is likely to continue as he is growing up. It is not too much to expect that the way he feels about his church and its activities when he is an adult and must make his own decisions will be largely dependent upon this same attitude.

The Earliest Preparation

The congregation that has an active and functioning Nursery Roll goes a long way in preparing a child for Sunday school. In the first place, the contacts made in the home over this period of time will be building a home-church relationship that will keep the importance of Christian child training constantly before the parents. Even more or less disinterested parents are not likely to remain indifferent to a church's consistent attention to the welfare of their baby over a period of one, two, or three years.

Although the Nursery Roll superintendent will seldom teach in the Nursery Class, she can be of inestimable help to a child at-

tending Sunday school for the first time. Just by her presence in the room, she is helping to ward off the strangeness of the situation. If she has visited in his home, if the child has come to know her well, it will mean much for him to find her there on that first morning. This would be a simple matter if all new children started on the same Sunday. This is not the case, however, and it would mean that the Nursery Roll superintendent would need to be in the Nursery room for a few minutes each Sunday morning.

Visiting Is Important

The Nursery Class teacher can render the same service if she will visit in the home at least once before a child is enrolled in her class. This can be arranged co-operatively between the teacher and mother. This works only with those who are members of the congregation or who have otherwise signified their interest in the church. Once it becomes known that the Nursery Class teacher welcomes the opportunity to visit a child in his home before he comes to Sunday school, many parents will seek this help for their little ones.

Still another way by which the Nursery Roll can help prepare a

child for the Nursery Class is to have parties now and then. In a large congregation, the invitations may have to be limited to those over two years of age. Have at least part of the activities take place in the classroom, so the children get acquainted with the room and its furnishings. Try to see to it that each child has a very pleasant time, that he associates this room with happy experiences. His mother is there, so he is not alone in a strange place. The teacher will be there and she will take a leading part in all the activities. If the group is small, those children already attending the Nursery Class may be included. It will give the child some added feeling of security when he first attends Sunday school to find there other children whom he knows.

Nursery Roll Mothers' Groups often meet in the afternoon and in many instances they bring their nursery-age children with them. The Nursery Class teacher, if she is free to do so, may be glad to have the children in the Nursery room during the mothers' meeting, where she may tell stories, lead them in simple group play, or teach them songs, finger plays and the like. Thus once every month or two these little ones, not yet quite

ready for a Sunday-school class, may be introduced to the kind of activity they will later get every Sunday morning. What is more important, they will get to know the room, the teacher, and each other.

What Can Be Done at Home

If there is a slightly older brother or sister, part of the problem solves itself. Almost all pre-school children, and even some who are older, often play Sunday school. Watch your five-year-old put her two-year-old brother through his training. She will tell the story, he must listen. She will sing, he must help. She will take the offering, he will contribute. She will lead the games, he must follow. Many mothers have the experience of having their second or third child beg to go to Sunday school before she, herself, thinks he is ready. In many cases a second or third child is ready for Sunday school at an earlier age than a first child partly because of playing Sunday school at home. If going to Sunday school is an important and happy occasion for others in the family, at two or even sooner, Baby wants to get in on it, too.

In any case, it is important that parents do everything they can to

prepare a little child for what he may expect when he first attends a Sunday school class. Explain to him what the procedures are like. Tell him the boys and girls in the Nursery Class will sing, they will pray, they will hear a story, they will look at pictures, they will give their money, they will get a story paper to bring home, sometimes they may make something to bring home, sometimes they may color or draw or cut out pictures, sometimes they may play games or take a walk. All of these things *we* are likely to take for granted, yet the two and three-year-olds may find them strange and for that reason, refuse to participate.

It will help if mother will learn at least one song they will sing and perhaps a finger play they will do, and she and the child can sing and say these things many times in the week or two preceding his first day in the class. It will help him

to find something familiar in the Nursery Class. It will be a connecting link between home and Sunday school.

Perhaps the most important thing parents can do for their child in this respect is so obvious that it needs no mention. Little children learn most readily by imitation. It is difficult to teach a child anything by *telling* unless one is also willing to teach by *doing*. Parents, who regularly and actively participate in a Bible class on Sunday morning, need have little concern about the attitude their baby is developing toward Sunday school. Week after week, these parents are setting the pattern for a wholesome attitude, a right attitude. Their child will grow up, scarcely remembering when he did *not* go to Sunday school. A safe rule for parents is, *Don't send your child to Sunday school, take him.*

A Message to Parents:

"And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Deuteronomy 6. 6-7.

Five Loaves and Two Fishes

By MRS. PAUL M. LINDBERG

Frankfurt, Germany

The Lindberg family is in the American Zone, Germany, where Dr. Paul M. Lindberg is director of Lutheran World Federation Service to Refugees (LWFSR). After reading Mrs. Lindberg's story our reason for including it in this National Family Week issue will be obvious. The Lindbergs' address is: Lutheran World Federation Service to Refugees, c/o IRO Area 1, APO 757, c/o P.M., New York, N. Y.

LITTLE did Mrs. B., way off on a Nebraska farm, realize that she was furnishing the inspiration for a wonderful St. Nicholas party, when she sent off that box of cocoa and holiday goodies to her daughter in Germany.

But when the box was opened in the Lutheran World Federation offices in Frankfurt, with an audience of interested DP and German workers looking on, Lois wondered out loud. Where could the box best be used? Where would it do the most good? Where would it give the greatest pleasure? One of the office workers suggested a St. Nicholas party for the children who live in the bunkers. The idea won instant approval. And soon many heads got together to make plans.

Few Americans know what "bunkers" are, so it might be in place to give a little description. A "bunker" is an air-raid shelter built during war times to give protection to the population during air raids. These bunkers were never meant to be used as permanent dwellings. Yet, because of the serious housing shortage in Germany, they are being used as such.

These shelters are large, concrete buildings with walls five feet thick. Small round holes about eight inches in diameter let in a little fresh air but no sunlight. There are three or four floors in each bunker, with halls running the length of each floor. A long row of small rooms eight by ten feet give off of each hall. In these small rooms live entire families, on

the average four persons to each room. Each family cooks, eats, sleeps, lives and washes its clothes in this one room. The heavy air is permanently redolent with layer upon layer of smells of cooking cabbage, mixed with the odor of too many human beings packed together into a space much too small for good health or clean living.

Many children live in these bunkers. It is the only shelter they have, and they are glad for it, poor as it is. For, you know, these children and their parents were driven from their homes in Silesia and East Prussia, and no longer have homes of their own. This is one of the awful results of the Potsdam Agreement, a document our own nation had a share in making. A number of the children in these bunkers are suffering from tuberculosis, with no hope of ever getting well. There is also the dark threat of infecting other youngsters who live with them in the same buildings. For those who are well it is almost an impossibility to play out of doors in the winter, for they do not have warm clothing or shoes with which to face the icy blasts of freezing weather. And so it came about that one person's concern over the dismal life these bunker children lead,

plus a box of goodies from home inspired the idea for a St. Nicholas party.

St. Nick's Visit

Not too many Americans know what a St. Nicholas Party is either, so that also bears explanation. St. Nicholas is very much like our Santa Claus. Only his day for joyous visitation is December 6th. Good St. Nick looks much like Santa Claus, too. He has a long, white beard and on his back he carries a large pack filled with gifts and goodies for all the good little boys and girls. But—and here's where he differs from Santa—he also carries a switch for all those naughty children who have not done their lessons well in school or who have been disobedient to parents or teachers. So always every year, in German homes and in German schools, there are parties where St. Nick suddenly and mysteriously appears. Children speak their pieces and sing their songs for him, and he gives them their due rewards.

In this case, the pastor of the local Lutheran church was consulted. At his suggestion it was decided to have the party in the parish hall. That was the only adequate place in the community for such a celebration. One kind American gentleman donated mon-

ey with which we were able to buy for each child a pair of real stockings which were filled with cookies and candies and apples. One of the German girls in the office, a girl who hopes to study in America to fit herself for caring for an orphans' home, planned and carried out a simple but beautiful little program. All those present participated. A little four-year-old American girl, whose heart had been touched by the story her mother had told her about the bunker children, gave her own best dolly as a gift of love. If one would judge the success of a party by the amount of noise evoked, then this was a very successful party. St. Nicholas' arrival caused much excitement, and of course, every child had been very, very good all year long, so each received a stocking. Shrieks of laughter split the air when St. Nicholas chased

Pastor Schwarz around the tables with his switch.

Food Loosens Tongues

The happy children drank the cocoa which came from Nebraska, and ate their rolls and coffee bread. We Americans had brought coffee and nice soft American rolls. Coffee, whether it is drunk in America or in Germany, seems to have the same power to loosen tongues, and soon we grown-ups were all visiting over the coffee cups.

Just before the party broke up, one of the little American girls, who had herself learned the song from the Germans, taught all the boys and girls to sing, in German, "Christ Is the King Over Every Land."

And that is how one small box of goodies from home grew, something like the five loaves and two fishes, into a big St. Nicholas party.

Chinese Proverb:

If you would plant for a year, plant grain; for ten years, plant trees; for one hundred years, plant men.

It Came Without Asking

By MRS. E. G. NELSON

First Lutheran Church, Kansas City, Mo.

Last summer Mrs. Nelson assisted us in several of our Augustana workshops. We quickly recognized her unusual ability and background in working with nursery children. So it was quite natural for us to ask her to write an article on the beginnings and the development of the Nursery Department in her own church. "Our Nursery Department did not need any urging," she writes. "It came without asking. It seems we have always had it." EDITOR.

YEARS ago the youngest children enrolled in the Sunday school were six years old or more. Leaders, usually very young and qualifications not considered, were handed a book and told to teach a big class of those youngsters.

And the material, it was far beyond their understanding, and, oh, yes, the memory verse was to be drilled every Sunday so that they could say it at least while they were in the class. It was really drilled, too, and seldom explained, so it had no meaning to them.

Songs and worship. Well, the whole Sunday school, including the adults, had that together at the opening and closing of Sunday school. It did not occur to the workers that the songs were too

long and too hard for the young children to sing. Also, the prayers and reading of Scripture by the superintendent were understood only by the adult members.

The young leaders were still young learners themselves, and having received no advice or training, not even a book to read regarding the age children they were expected to teach, or methods to be used to give Christian nurture, they accomplished very little.

However, all the Sunday-school workers of those days were faithful and consecrated and, no doubt, were a fine influence on the children, whom they taught to the best of their ability. For this we are thankful and do not underestimate the result of their endeavors.

Special Guidance

After some experience, the leader felt the need for special training and guidance. The children were not interested in the formal procedure, were suppressed too much, and were deriving far less than they should during the Sunday-school hour. As a result there was the study of the primary child and their needs by the leaders.

Gradually this small group of children was withdrawn from the opening and closing worship of the whole Sunday school. A separate session within their understanding took its place. No more swinging of legs under the high church pews. No more turning around watching the older ones sing. It was soon realized by all workers that this was a step forward. The children enjoyed thoroughly singing their own childish songs, and saying prayers and Bible verses somewhat within their understanding. That was the beginning of separate departments in our church school, two classes of six and seven-year-old children.

To our surprise it was only a short time later that children of the congregation started to come at a younger age than six years. We were not prepared either in

material or leadership. Fortunately, we received help in the selection of material suitable for that age from a religious educational school, which we used until it was available from our own publishing company. These children were called "Beginners."

Small chairs, in two sizes, were bought, also pictures appropriate for little children. We met in the basement of the church and the chairs were moved to a corner of the room every Sunday. Were we happy in our work? Yes, thrilled with the realization of having two departments, primary and beginner. But, with it came more responsibility, more learning for the leaders, the necessity of more help and training.

A Surprise

Had we foresight, we might have known there was another big surprise in store, the three-year-olds were coming and coming soon. We had been doing Cradle Roll work among the babies of the church for sometime, and with the material and the visits made by a faithful worker, the parents must have become aware of the importance of giving religious knowledge early. All denominations had this same experience and most of them were unprepared with ma-

terial for such a young age. Our children's division had now grown to consist of three separate departments including the new one, Nursery.

We were now in our new church in a separate room with seventy-five children. But, we came to know definitely that opening worship with a group of such difference in ages was not advisable. No leader can plan a procedure to efficiently give knowledge, and inspiration, or to hold the interest of all three groups. It would be on the level of one group only. Furthermore, we had learned the younger children should have more informal instruction. Within a short time, all three departments were having their own sessions in their own rooms. That was sixteen years ago. Instead of one teacher with a group of twenty-three primary children, we now have three departments, twelve workers and about one hundred and fifteen children. We have just started our fourth department, the *Pre-nursery* group numbering six little ones two-and-a-half years and under.

Capacity for Religious Growth

Little children under four years of age definitely have the capacity

for religious growth. During these years ways of thinking, feeling, and acting are established. Neglect during these first years of life is serious. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it" is a verse which is a challenge to us. Another is, "Feed my lambs." The first impressions are the most lasting. Those first years must be a time when we are concerned for the religious growth of little children. We receive them in baptism. We must also accept responsibility for their Christian nurture. That nurture can not begin too early.

Need for Security

When a child comes to church school the first time, he enters into a new world. It is the first big step in his life. It is the time when he is learning many things. He must find security with the teachers, and must feel their interest and love for him. He is highly sensitive to his environment. Therefore the general atmosphere of the Nursery room is important.

Jesus' Method

How do we teach these little ones? Jesus was the Master Teacher. If we are to teach effectively and succeed we must follow His method. His teaching was simple but full of meaning.

Much was in story form and everyday life experiences were used to interpret His teaching. His was informal teaching. It is His winsome personality that we need most to imitate, His love, sympathy, goodness and appreciation. If we are to lead these little ones into Christian experiences, we must be sincerely Christian ourselves. Our sincerity is felt by the children. As parents and teachers interpret Christian living through their close association with Jesus, the little child learns Christian ways of living.

All teaching should be on the level of the little child. This should be remembered in the selection of stories, pictures, songs, prayers, conversation, books and all activities. The little children like familiar things, so repetition is important and profitable.

How Children Learn

Children learn through *activity*. That which is actually done is understood and remembered better than that which is listened to. Actual sharing, actual friendliness, actual co-operation and helpfulness while playing with toys in the church-school room, these are the ways in which children experience Christian living. Telling them is not sufficient.

Children learn through *songs*. The songs should be very simple and usually not over four lines long. Many good nursery songs are only two lines. The words should be within the children's experience and understanding. "Jesus Loves Me" is a longer song than most nursery children can memorize, but it is sung in many of our homes and all seem to know it. Children do not need many songs. They enjoy singing them over and over throughout the year.

Children learn through *prayer*. If a child is really to learn to know God, he must experience the joy of talking to Him at any time and in any place. He should learn to express himself in his own simple words about his own joys and problems. The teacher's prayers, therefore, should be simple and within the experience of the children. This is preferable to form prayers. With care, however, form prayers should be used. They help the children in the choice of words.

Children learn through the *Bible*. The children need to learn to appreciate and know the Bible. They need to see the teacher use it often and reverently. They learn to love the Bible when it is handled with care by those whom

they love and admire. We want them to think of the Bible as a book different from other books because it tells the most about God and Jesus, and tells us right and wrong, and contains stories they like. The Bible should be on the worship center and used by the teacher when telling stories. The children should be encouraged to hold it occasionally, also. Bible verses are used anytime during the session when opportunity arises.

Stories, Books, Pictures

Children learn through *stories*. The stories should be taken from the Bible, from things of everyday experience, from nature, about Christian living and good conduct. They should be short, since the span of the Nursery child's attention is about three minutes.

Children learn through *books and pictures*. The books can be about food, pets, children, birds, and other subjects with which children are familiar. Pictures can be of similar subjects and also about church, Jesus, nature, the various seasons, etc. Pictures used with Nursery children should be large and clear, and when possible in color. There should be no confusing details or blurred background. The subjects should be within the grasp of the children.

Children learn through experiences with *food and nature*. Flowers, vegetables, birds, these help the children understand God's plan of creation. At the different seasons of the year we can help to interpret to the child the world about us. Flowers in their various sizes and colors, branches of blossoms which later become fruit, fall leaves and then the bare branches, apples and oranges can all be used in the church-school room as lessons about God's world. Feeding the birds in winter, and having a real bird nest for the children to see and touch is fine. And, of course, the wind and sky, sunshine and rain, and the winter snow thrill little children.

Children learn through *dramatization*. Playing they are walking to church, planting seeds and growing up like flowers, playing raindrops or snowflakes are just a few examples.

Children learn through *remembering others*. Help them to make simple gifts for Mother and Father on Mother's Day and Father's Day, valentines, something to hang on the family Christmas tree.

Not Only the Story

The lesson in the Nursery Class is not only the story but *everything*

that happens during the entire session. Informal teaching enables the teacher not only to lead the child but to give the child opportunity to practice what the teacher and the leaders are trying to teach. Informal teaching does not alter the truth of a given lesson. It merely teaches it more effectively.

Thus the child develops in a setting of affection, understanding, kindly discipline, and encouragement for achievement. It is with prayer and patience that the seed is sown.

Parent-Teacher Co-operation

Parents and teachers should work together closely. Parents do visit the school when the child is first brought to the church school. At that visit and frequently afterward they should be informed of the aims and purposes of the Nursery Department so that they can co-operate in continuing the teaching in the home. Classes for parents are recommended for this purpose. Let these classes be held for as many Sundays as seems possible and practical.

Equipment and Materials for a Nursery

Small, sturdy chairs and a low table. More than one if group is large.

Shelves and cabinets for storage of toys. These should be low and easily accessible to the children.

Picture rail or ledge placed on eye level of children.

Rug or mats on floor, if possible. An old rug, cleaned, will serve fine.

Blocks for constructive building.

Large spools and wooden beads for stringing.

Large ball.

Doll dishes, unbreakable.

Picture books.

If room is large, housekeeping equipment and dolls and doll bed are useful.

Low hooks or clothes rack for wraps.

Low small table for worship center.

Cabinet for storing materials such as crayons, drawing paper, lesson leaflets, one for each child filed alphabetically. Appropriate pictures from magazines and other sources, mounted, and filed in folders under headings.

Turn to page 32

The Church in the House

By PAUL L. BAUMGARTNER
 Pastor, St. Paul's Church, Massillon, Ohio

HALF HIDDEN in Paul's letter to Philemon is a suggestive phrase that never ceases to intrigue me. You will find it in the second verse where he speaks of: "the church in your house." (R.S.V.)

It throws into sharp focus a truth we are all aware of, the interrelation of church and home. The more one traces those lines of interaction the more difficult it is to be sure which is the more important: what the church contributes to the home, or what the home gives to the church. At any rate it is like two lakes connected by a pair of parallel channels with the water flowing in opposite directions, each lake receiving from the other. Any thinking Christian can discern at least three important, practical facets of this truth, especially in connection with our work of religious education in the Sunday school.

Words Are Symbols

Consider first that the words we use in Sunday school have meaning for the most part from the ex-

periences in the home. Words are symbols. The content and meaning of those words for an individual depends upon what happened to that person in his home. The word "Father" will not have the same content for two boys, one whose father is in the penitentiary and the other whose father is an understanding, mature, loving adult. You recall the difficult problem translators of the New Testament ran into with the inhabitants of a certain island. There was no word in their language for "thanksgiving" or "thankful." They had no experiences in everyday life requiring that word in their vocabulary. What will the word "forgiveness" mean to a child brought up in a rigid, stern, demanding, unrelenting home atmosphere, if both parents tend to be like Elizabeth Barrett Browning's father? Where does a child gain meaning and content for that distinctively Christian concept, love for an enemy? What does loving an enemy mean anyhow, if anything, for the average Christian?

The above truth leads us to the second consideration. Do you and I as Sunday-school teachers have any contribution to make at precisely this point, helping by the grace of God to fill the words we teach with genuine meaning for children whose home experiences contradict the words and drain their meaning? I mean, more definitely, establishing a personal relationship between that child and me which will help to make up for the experiences that child should receive at home but does not.

What do you say and do about children who come from homes that are far below ideal, Christian examples? Simply mark them off as problem children and give them up? How in any sense of the word can we talk about the Gospel for them if we feel that way about it? And do we need to remind ourselves again that originally the Sunday school was designed for just those children, children who came off the street, children about whom it could not be said that there was a "church in your house"? Are not the children from inadequate Christian homes the people who need our Sunday schools most?

Homes in which Christian faith can flourish, homes in which the

Holy Spirit is not blocked, homes in which the *words* of God can grow into ever richer and fuller meaning, will be homes where a girl can learn what it means to be a Christian, feminine woman, and a boy what it means to be a Christian, masculine man. How many girls are confused and do not know what Christian femininity means, because of an immature mother to whom they could never feel close? Can they learn that from you women teachers, because they can feel close to you? How many boys are confused and do not know what Christian manhood means, because of a rejecting father to whom they could not relate? Can they feel and learn their way into mature manhood because of the relationship they were able to establish with us men teachers?

In other words, can we teachers be people who can supply for children what they should have received at home and did not? Can we by our personal relationships with them substitute for and make up for inadequate and often unchristian parents?

Emotional Needs

Every growing child has certain emotional needs which must be satisfied. He needs acceptance, or call it Christian love. This enables

him to comprehend the love of the Father. He needs to be made to feel free and safe in being utterly honest always about his real feelings. Suppressing hostility or guilty feelings is injurious to sound mental health and is unchristian. This prepares him to be able to confess sins. Remember what Paul said in Romans 2.4 about the goodness of God persuading us to repentance. A child needs recognition to feel that he counts. This helps him to arrive at the experience that comes on the day when he realizes he is individually responsible to God. If these experiences are not furnished in the home, do not we who teach have a unique opportunity and unusual responsibility? Of course, this will mean contacts and time with pupils outside the classroom.

The Teacher's Opportunity

We have in this second part been thinking about our contribution as teachers to boys and girls whose home life frustrates the grace of God and contradicts the Word of God. At best, of course, it is always second best. Nevertheless we have opportunities to be "mothers" and "fathers" to the glory of God for many children in this modern era of torn and bleeding homes.

But finally, the third consideration. As teachers of religious education, what responsibility and opportunity do we have to help create homes out of which come experiences which give Christian meaning to the words we teach? We have now completed the cycle and are back where we began with the first consideration. Can young people feel free to talk with us about some of the deepest and most personal questions that stir in their hearts and minds, because we will not be embarrassed, neither become preachy, but will sympathetically understand? Can we win and deserve their confidence as they think about the opposite sex and the home they will one day inherit as theirs?

Sex, Marriage and Family Relations

Does our duty as teachers of Christian religion include teaching and discussion on Christian attitudes toward marriage and the home? There are Christian truths about sex, marriage and family relations. Does Christian education in our Sunday schools include these, also? As only one specific instance among many: if domineering parents insist on their daughter marrying the man of their choice, or perhaps not marry-

ing at all, is there anyone who can help her think her way out into the open air of her rightful Christian freedom and so be free to think of the man of God's choice. Would a Christian teacher have a function there?

The True Home

At any rate it is where boys and

girls are free and able to consider and accept God's choice for a mate. It is where homes can arise that will continue to fit the description of Paul's words. They will be homes with a "church in your house." No doubt the church in the nation will never be stronger than the church in the house.

Activities

in the Field of Christian Education

By I. O. NOTHSTEIN

Preparation for the Harvest. Now is a good time to ask what we hope to gain in the way of Sunday-school enrollment during the current year. Recalling the Lutheran statistics published near the close of 1949, we were told that the greatest encouragement gained from the figures for the previous year was due to the upsurge indicated in parish education. A total of 2,344,092 pupils are reported enrolled in parish schools, which represents an increase of 135,474 pupils, or 6.1 per cent, over the 1947 number.

There was an increase averaging better than eight pupils per local congregation. A total of 976 new congregational schools had

been established during the year. At present American birth rate, and the number of baptisms being what they are in the average congregation, the gain shown above is not extraordinary, and could well have been better than eight pupils per local congregation.

* * *

One of the Largest. Hollywood, California, sometimes surprises us by doing the unexpected. The First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood has one of the largest Sunday schools in America, and is about to erect a new parish education building having a capacity of 4,000 persons. This church is also the largest in that denomination in America.

Workshops for Church-school Teachers. The Augustana Church which initiated eight workshops for its Sunday school teachers, through its Board of Parish Education and its executive director, during the past year, found them eminently useful. Approximately 1,000 teachers and officers from all sections of the country were reached. The executive director was ably assisted by his four field workers plus local talent in the various localities.

The meetings have proved so helpful that the Board voted to continue them, and to train capable persons in each Conference as workshop demonstration teachers.

* * *

Leadership Training. The American Lutheran Church again concentrated on leadership training schools during 1949. A visitor is quoted as having stated in regard to these schools: "I envy you of the American Lutheran Church your excellent leadership training schools. I have sat in on both the regular and the advance schools and find that they are far and above any other plan or program offered any other youth group I know."

During the past year 1,282 carefully chosen young people attended

the regular series of these schools. Of this total 197, or 15 per cent, offered themselves for full-time Christian service. Tabulated the preferences expressed were as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Ministry | 79 |
| Missionary | 30 |
| Parish Work | 29 |
| Day-school Teacher | 18 |
| Church Secretary | 7 |
| Deaconess | 6 |
| Social Work | 21 |
| Institutional Work | 7 |

Total 197

"While the training schools do give youth the opportunity to think about full-time service," says *The Standard*, "that is really not the major emphasis of the schools. The greatest emphasis is upon service to the home congregation and the pastor. In this regard the results are interesting and pleasing. For example, 665 of the young people promised to start family worship in their homes when they returned, 517 of them promised to offer themselves as Sunday-school teachers, 739 would try to win at least one person for the Sunday school, and 729 hoped to win one for their Luther League."

Besides this, the young people were taught how really to search

the Scriptures, by means of the concordance in their Bible, the marginal references and cross references, the Bible handbook, and the Bible dictionary. They had a course in stewardship through the co-operation of the church's Department of Stewardship and Finance, which taught them the proper use of youth's time, talents and possessions.

Something new was added in the afternoon periods. Carefully prepared materials were handed to the young people for a one-hour period of private meditation. They were asked to use the full hour alone with God. "For this hour the meditation guides suggested certain Scriptures to be read; various areas of thought that covered mostly the topics of sin, grace, and Christian service; and numerous prayer suggestions for the individual to use." There was a very favorable reaction to this meditation hour. Approximately 10,000 young people have been to leadership training schools during the past six years.

* * *

Recognition. Mr. Theodore Anderson, who became an active worker in the Sunday school of the Messiah Lutheran Church (E.L.C.) in Tacoma, Wash., in

1904 and has been its superintendent since 1909, was honored at a special fellowship program in his church near the close of the year. During his long period of service he has missed very few Sundays. He has been singing in the church choir for fifty years, and at one time he had eight grandchildren singing in the choirs of the church. Mr. Anderson, at seventy-seven, is still active.

* * *

Cheering Signs Among Students.

More than 97 per cent of all University of Delaware students consider themselves affiliated with some church, according to a registration survey. Upwards of 2,100 students were polled and only 48 failed to specify a religious preference, or wrote "none." The president said he considered the poll results a refutation of criticism that college students today tend toward a "godless cynicism, or that a public university can not contribute to their spiritual life."

A \$140,000 Lutheran Student Center was recently dedicated at the University of Wisconsin, to serve the more than 3,000 Lutheran students at that institution. The governor of the state and the president of the university attended the exercises.

The Teacher, an Evangelist

ROBERT W. LONG

Pastor, Arlington, Virginia

THE NEED for the religious education of our children is perhaps more widely recognized today by thinking people than at any time in recent years. From many sources come pleas for more thorough religious education to develop adults with enough moral power to live at peace in a world filled with atomic destruction.

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover and his staff of agents have made the church school a desirable and socially acceptable institution in the eyes of many a growing boy. Parents, whose religious convictions are as nebulous as the fleecy clouds in a summer sky, are not only willing but eager for their offspring to be exposed to the wholesome influence of the church school. The average church-school teacher is therefore face to face with a class of boys and girls, many of whom come from homes which have no other contact with the church. This situation represents one of the most challenging opportunities for evangelism in the modern church.

Commitment Is Necessary

The teacher of the Christian faith would do well to remind himself that the prime motive in Christian teaching is always complete commitment to Jesus Christ. To teach without this supreme purpose is to miss the mark. We are to teach that those who hear may become disciples of the Master of all life, Jesus Christ. Jesus was not finished with the Samaritan woman at the well until she had committed herself to discipleship. The apostles would not be silenced until baptism and commitment to the Christian faith and life were the natural outcome of their teaching. Christian teaching should be motivated by the desire to win disciples to Christ.

In view of the unusual opportunity to meet the unchurched and the eternal challenge to bring others to Christ, the church-school teacher occupies an exceptionally strategic place in the evangelism work of the church. The vital question is, of course, how may the teacher best fulfill this glorious opportunity.

Pray Without Ceasing

What a glorious opportunity the church-school teacher has to remember before the throne of Grace each member of the class by name. Something is bound to happen in the life of a boy or girl whose teacher prays regularly for the spiritual growth of his class. "Help Mary to grow in reverence, dear Lord"; or "Give John control of his tongue, O God" are the type of simple and direct prayers which will avail much. In his prayers the teacher should remember the homes from which his pupils come, that they may grow in Christian grace and love. And, of course, the church-school teacher will always pray God to use him as a channel of divine grace that the Holy Spirit may turn the hearts of those who have come to hear.

The teacher who is most effective as an evangelist will always start with prayer. It will undergird his life and his message with a new and wondrous glow, lighting candles in the hearts and homes of his pupils.

Show Concern

The modern church school is in great danger of losing the warm personal contact of an earlier day, when schools were not so highly departmentalized and equipment

was not so elaborate. The evangelist is *concerned* about the spiritual growth of those who are within his reach.

Visiting Unchurched Homes

There are a number of ways in which a church-school teacher may show concern for his flock. There is never any substitute for *personal visiting* in effective evangelism. The teacher who would be an effective evangelist will visit in the home of each member of his class. He will talk about the program of religious education in the church school, and he will offer to assist the parents in problems arising in the spiritual training of their children. He will speak freely about baptism and confirmation which are definite steps to be taken toward church membership. In this manner the teacher reaches into many unchurched homes and often is referred to other children in the neighborhood who have no church home. Very often the parents have definite questions about the church which need to be answered. Many times parents have been attracted to the church of Jesus Christ by the sincere and consecrated personality of a church-school teacher who is ready to serve without remuneration in the interest of spreading the gospel.

When the teacher is interested enough to telephone when the child is absent, or to send a card when the child is ill, the teacher has made a friend for Jesus Christ.

Some church schools issue grade cards periodically to indicate the spiritual development of the child. In this manner the parent is made aware of the child's growth in reverence, willingness to co-operate, and performance of the work required. If improvement is needed this is indicated. This is just another way of maintaining the proper relationship between the school and the home. It places the parent and the teacher side by side in working for a common goal, the discipleship of the child.

Personal Interest Pays

Recently a consecrated speaker who always stimulates her audience recalled her girlhood days in the church school. She remembered especially the friendly custom of her teacher to invite two of the little girls in her class home for Sunday dinner each week. It is such kindly personal interest on the part of the teacher that wins the members of her class to the fellowship of the saints.

Actually the best evangelists on our church-school staff are seldom conscious of any set technique in

the winning of souls. They start by loving the Lord Jesus with all of their hearts, and because of this they love the members of their class with a tenacity that will not let them go. They are concerned about all manner of persons. They speak of the children of Europe who need food and clothing and God's Word, but they do not forget the children who have just moved in around the corner. The concern of the teacher for the unchurched and the absentees is transferred to each member present until this loving concern is multiplied greatly. "Nothing succeeds like success" is true of church school, too. When there is effective teaching, and personal concern is manifested by the teacher, each member of the class becomes a witness of this fact. Not until the members of the class are convinced that there is something of real worth for them do they become bearers of the "good news" to those who are without.

Confirmation Day ought to gladden the heart of every church-school teacher, for it is the day of commitment. For those who teach the post-confirmation group it is a day of challenge, for they must teach the Word with zeal and great devotion, that the fire of commitment may be kept alive always.

From Your Director

From page 4

Units IV, V, and VI are in essence a child's "Life of Christ," showing how Jesus started His work. He healed people, He taught people, He loved children, He entered Jerusalem, He made Easter a happy day, and He returned to heaven. The unit concludes with the lesson thought, "We love Jesus."

VII. We Obey

VIII. We Pray

IX. We Help Others

X. We Serve Jesus. This unit refers especially to the church and the child's place in the church.

XI. At Home with Jesus

These lessons will be available in the fall of 1950.

The Board recommends that at each District Institute a course, "Teaching the Nursery Class" be

given. Mrs. Shupe, who has outlined the course and written the stories for the children, will teach this course. Plan now to send teachers to your District Institutes.

Equipment and Materials

From page 22

One or two permanent pictures, framed and hung low on the wall. "Christ Blessing Little Children" by Plockhorst is a favorite.

Worship Center

A small, low table containing very few things, including a Bible and plate for the children's gifts, a vase of flowers in season. Fall leaves in fall. Nothing symbolic should be used in the Nursery Class. Worship centers should be graded like everything else in that department. Everything that is used or taught should have religious meaning to the child *now*.

God does not force His favors upon us.
He only places them within our reach.